

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*If astral intelligences are capable of seeing through matter, why is it that no spirit control of a medium is able to meet the now famous orange counting test?*

This question refers to a test to which the Psychical Research Society has put its subjects. It is said that it has offered the sum of five thousand dollars to any medium who can tell the exact number of oranges as they are poured out of a bag into a basket or similar object placed to receive them.

Up to the present time no one has been able to either guess or tell the exact number of oranges on the table or in a basket, though many have made the attempt.

If the correct answer is to be given, it must be given either by the intelligence of the medium or by that intelligence which controls the medium. If the intelligence of the medium were able to solve the problem there would be no need of a control; but neither the medium nor the control has solved the problem. The problem involves not the ability to see through matter, but to compute numbers. Both medium and control may be able to see through matter, as a child might through a glass see the people passing on the opposite side of the street. But if the child has not learned the mental operation of counting, it will not be able to tell the number in front of the window at any given time. It requires a mind trained in counting to be able to add up a large column of figures quickly, and still more trained must be the mind which is able to tell how many coins there are in a group or how many people in a crowd.

As a rule, the mentality of mediums is not of a high order, and the controls of the mediums are below the average of ordinary human beings. A clairvoyant or a control of a medium may, like a child in a library, art gallery or flower garden, see the objects therein. Like the child the control of the medium or the clairvoyant might speak of the strange books in their costly cases, or of the wonderful pieces of art, and of the beautiful flowers, but would be at a woeful loss to deal with the subject matter of the books, to criticize and describe the art treasures or to speak of the flowers in terms other

than descriptive. The ability to see through matter does not include the capacity to know what is seen.

A direct answer to the question as to why no medium has been able to qualify for the test is: because no human being has so trained his mind as to be able to compute at a glance the units making up a large number. This is why the medium is not able to clairvoyantly tell the number of oranges in a large bag or basket. A "spirit control" knows no more, where mental operations are concerned, than the mind of that control knew at any time when it was the informing principle of a human being.

If any of those present were able to perform the mental operation of computing the number and would hold the number in his mind, either the control or the medium would be able to give the answer. But inasmuch as none of the minds present can do this, the control is also unable to do it. No control of any medium is able to perform a mental operation that has never been performed by human beings.

*What explanation can Theosophy offer for the terrific earthquakes which so frequently occur, and which may destroy thousands of people?*

According to Theosophy all things in the universe are related to each other. Men, plants, animals, water, air, earth and all the elements act and react on each other. Gross bodies are moved by finer bodies, unintelligent bodies are moved by intelligence, and all matter circulates throughout the domains of nature. Every catastrophe as an effect must have been the result of a cause. All phenomena attended by good or disastrous results are the outcome and results of the thoughts of man.

The thoughts of a people surround or ascend and form in groups or clouds as it were above and around that people, and the cloud of thought is of the nature of the people who form it. Each thought of each person adds to the general sum of the thought which is suspended over the people. So each country has hanging over it and about it the thoughts and nature of the people who live on the land. As the atmosphere of the earth has forces playing through it which affect the earth, so the mental atmosphere in clouds of thoughts also affect the earth. As the conflicting elements in the atmosphere, result and find their vent in a storm, so conflicting thoughts in the mental atmosphere must also find their expression through physical phenomena and such phenomena as are of the nature of the thoughts.

The atmosphere of the earth and the mental atmosphere of men react on the forces of the earth. There is a circulation of the forces within and outside the earth; these forces and their action in any particular part of the earth conform to the general laws which control the earth as a whole. As the races of men appear, develop and decay on different parts of the earth, and as the earth, too, must change its structure in the course of ages, the changes necessary to the general development must be brought about, resulting in change of the inclination of the axis of the earth and of the earth's conformation.

An earthquake is caused by an attempt, by the effort of the earth to adjust itself to the forces which affect it and to equalize and to balance itself in its changes. When large numbers of people are destroyed by an earthquake it means that not only is the earth adjusting itself according to a geographical plan, but that the majority of those who suffer death have met it in this way on account of the karmic causes which they have engendered.

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